

IN THE CLAIMS

1-5 (cancelled)

6. (previously presented) Apparatus for controlling units within a continuous flow from at least one incoming feeder track into at least one outgoing feeder track, comprising at least one shifting unit for controlled shifting of said flow into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track, wherein said shifting unit is provided with means for controlling the speeds of the respective units, while maintaining said continuous flow of said units without arresting said continuous flow, for separation of the units in the longitudinal direction of flow, said separation enabling said controlled shifting.

7. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said means for controlling the speeds of the respective units is arranged to control the speed of each unit, with a controlled acceleration of said unit up to a speed exceeding the speed of the flow within said incoming track, said separation resulting in a distance between two consecutive units, inside said shifting unit.

8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said incoming track is arranged for feeding units at a variable speed, while the shifting unit is arranged for a constant speed, said means for controlling the speeds of the respective units being arranged to control the shifting after a predetermined number of units.

10. (previously presented) A method for controlling units within a flow from at least one incoming feeder track into at least one outgoing feeder track, comprising controlled shifting of said flow into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track, said method comprising:

controlling the speeds of the respective units, for separation of the units in the longitudinal direction of flow,

said shifting being performed between two consecutive units separated by a distance enabling said controlled shifting.

11. (previously presented) Apparatus for controlling units within a flow from at least one incoming feeder track into at least one outgoing feeder track, comprising at least one shifting unit for controlled shifting of said flow into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track, wherein said shifting unit is provided with means for controlling the speeds of the respective units by controlled acceleration of the respective units up to a speed exceeding the speed of the flow within said incoming feeder track, for separation of the units in the longitudinal direction of flow, said separation resulting in a distance between two consecutive units, inside said shifting unit, and enabling said controlled shifting.

12. (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said separation allows further comprising a counter for counting of said units as said units pass said shifting unit.

13. (previously presented) The method according to claim 10, further comprising counting said units as said units are shifted.

14. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 6, in which said plurality of selectable paths are horizontally spaced.

15. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 6, in which said plurality of selectable paths are vertically spaced.

16. (previously presented) The method according to claim 10, further comprising forming bundles of said units by repetitively performing said shifting of said flow onto each of said plurality of selectable paths.

17. (new) Apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said at least one shifting unit is pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis.

18. (new) Apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.

19. (new) Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said at least one shifting unit is pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis.

20. (new) Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.